

# **Naismith fully 'focused' on Edinburgh Derby**

**Steven Naismith, Hearts' head coach, admitted his disappointment at the 5-0 reverse at Ibrox last Saturday, and his frustration at the way the goals were conceded, but declared: "We'll prepare for Hibs."**

Only Yutaro Oda is ruled out of the squad for the Tynecastle clash (kick-off 19.45) on Wednesday with a calf issue, but Naismith said that there were lessons to be learned from the Ibrox defeat.

His squad has, since then, been focusing on the clash with Hibs, looking at their threats and in possession how Hearts can hurt the opposition, as well as reflecting on the defeat by Rangers.

The former Scottish international stressed: "We need to be competitive in the game when it is 0-0 and we were makers of our own down-fall at times (at Ibrox)."

The coach was frustrated as the general statistics of the game "turn out alright". He added that the lesson the squad needs to learn is not to concede a goal after two minutes, not go 3-0 down after the first-half and not conceding another goal two minutes into the second period.

Naismith said: "We have been on a good run of form, but you

have come up against the best team in the league at the moment and a team who played really well as their manager said after the game.

“Like every game, we look back at it and we do what we need to do. We review and we try to improve ourselves, but we know the game on Wednesday will be a different game, being at home.”

He added: “The 11 we think will do best in the game (on Wednesday) will be the ones who play. Again that is how we have worked consistently all season.

“There have been times earlier in the season when results haven’t gone our way and we have had to make decisions on the starting team, but the squad does not become poor overnight, individual players don’t become poor on the back of one performance.

“We have a competitive group but you need to be performing and doing things right to stay in the team.”

He disagreed that Saturday’s 5-0 defeat was “a wake-up call” for the Jambos and said: “You can never be off it. If you are off it at points you will get punished when you are playing against the best team in the league and that is what happened.

“I am not sure that there are any of the five goals that we are sitting going: ‘That’s brilliant play.’ Every goal we had a big part to play in it and it is about improving on that.”

Wednesday is, he said, a big game and the positive is that there is a cinch Premiership fixture which is scheduled quickly after the heavy road defeat.

Naismith added: “So far, to this point, it has been a good season, we are in a comfortable position in third and it is about continuing on that progress.

“We just need to keep our levels as high as possible and the results will take care of themselves.”

Looking back, the Irvine-born former striker felt the last Derby lacked “a bit of quality” but overall he said: “They have been entertaining games. “We won the last one and we shot ourselves in the foot in the first one but we have been in good places throughout the games and I want us to start fast have energy and ultimately make it an atmosphere that is intimidating.”

Naismith said: “Every game you want to start fast and get control and stamp your authority on it. We have shown over the course of the last three months that we are a good team.”

PICTURE: Steven Naismith faces the media at The Oriam ahead of the clash with Hibs. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***